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UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
NORTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA
SAN JOSE DIVISION

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,)	NO. 24-CR-00459-EKL
)	
Plaintiff,)	GOVERNMENT'S SENTENCING
)	MEMORANDUM
v.)	
)	
JOANNE MARIAN SEGOVIA,)	Judge: Hon. Eumi K. Lee
)	Date: January 21, 2025, 10:30 a.m.
Defendant.)	Court: San Jose, Courtroom 7, 4th Floor
)	

I. STATEMENT OF THE OFFENSE

The story of Joanne Segovia is the story of years of heavy opioid addiction, drug importation, self-delusion, and some very poor choices. It is not, however, the story of a drug dealer.

The government will explain how the investigation into Segovia unfolded.

A. Fall 2022: "Durgapura pharmacy" network and Segovia as a customer

In fall 2022, Homeland Security agents were investigating a criminal network in India that shipped controlled substances in pill form—some made by foreign pharmaceutical companies, some counterfeited—to U.S. customers. A local operative in San Jose named Rajiv Agnihotri was arrested.¹

¹ He was federally charged in October 2023 and is set to be sentenced on March 12, 2025 in San Jose, California. *United States v. Rajiv Agnihotri*, Case No. 5:23-cr-00354-PCP.

His co-conspirators in India, calling themselves the “Durgapura pharmacy,” ran websites to lure consumers with the “cheapest” meds and “overnight” shipping. Once a customer was drawn in, they switched to encrypted texts or calls, often barraging the buyer with messages about “deals.” This Durgapura network in effect had sales reps, perhaps dozens, who operated out of a call center.

They sold mostly abusable psychoactives. The best-selling drug by volume was Zolpidem, a Schedule IV anti-insomnia medication generally known by the trade name Ambien. Also popular were the opioids Tapentadol (Schedule II, sometimes sold as Aspadol) and Tramadol (Schedule IV), as well as Carisoprodol, a Schedule IV muscle relaxant (trade name Soma) that some users feel enhances the opioid experience. Tapentadol has become a drug of immense abuse in the U.S. Some call them “Indian M30s,” using the street term for the ubiquitous counterfeit fentanyl pill.

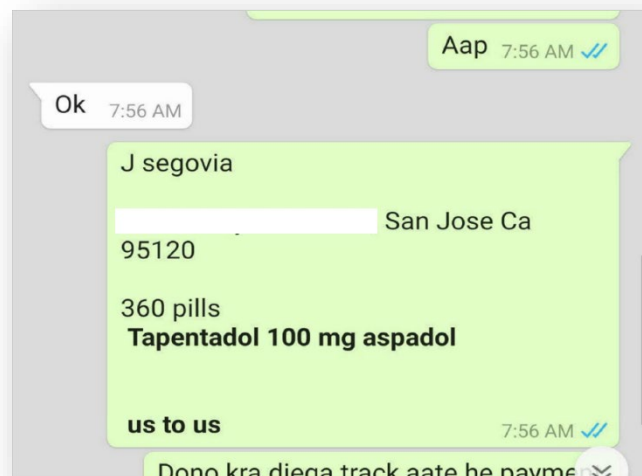
The Durgapura crew did brisk business. Agnihotri’s job was to fulfill orders taken by colleagues by text or phone. Day after day, he walked into a post office in Sunnyvale, California, with stacks of pre-addressed parcels, often jamming up the customer line. In one 52-day period in fall 2022 alone, he mailed out an astonishing 215,000 pills to some 700 customers in 48 states.

In November 2022, Homeland Security agents obtained the contents of Agnihotri’s phone. They found the Durgapura organization’s impressive customer list, along with some of its sales records.

One client was a Joanne Segovia of San Jose, California. Her past orders were in Agnihotri’s phone, with Hindi-language notes about tracking payment. (Image at right.)

Investigators noticed something else: Segovia was the Executive Director of the San Jose Police Officers’ Association (or SJPOA). She had worked there since 2003.

They soon also learned that her home address had been the intended destination, between 2019 and 2023, of five shipments that had been seized at ports of entry—packages that together contained tens of thousands of pills of Zolpidem, Tramadol, and Tapentadol. Between 2015 and 2023,



1 moreover, records showed that another 61 parcels had arrived to her home, originating from Canada,
2 China, Spain, Great Britain, Hong Kong, Hungary, India, and Singapore and labeled with terms like
3 “Gift Makeup,” “Chocolate and Sweets,” “Food Supplement,” and “Health Product.”

4 **B. February 1 and March 14, 2023: Segovia interviews with Homeland Security**

5 On February 1, 2023, two Homeland Security special agents interviewed Segovia at her home.
6 She was told that pill orders with her name and address turned up in an investigation. She told the agents
7 that she worked for the “police department.” Then she began to lie. She claimed that she had only
8 ordered “supplements” and “nothing out of the ordinary.” She said that she only received prescription
9 pain medications through her doctor and would never order by mail, adding “I wouldn’t even know
10 where to start.” She recognized that it was unsafe to buy prescription medications on the internet and that
11 doing so was “asking for trouble.” She declared that she would never take medications from someone
12 she had “never met” and that doing so would be “stupid.” She refused to let agents see her CashApp
13 transactions. She called the investigators’ questions “ridiculous” and “crazy.” She insisted, petulantly,
14 that she had no idea why her name and address were found on the phone of a pill trafficker.

15 Agents didn’t believe her. But the lead agent, David Vargas, at the end of the interview, politely
16 asked her to call him if she recalled anything of use to the investigation.

17 Six weeks later, Segovia called, claiming she had information to offer. On March 14, 2023, she
18 visited Homeland Security’s San Jose office (with an individual who purportedly had worked for the
19 SJPOA). Her purpose, it turned out, was to throw agents off the scent. Segovia said that it had occurred
20 to her “like a light bulb” that her housekeeper must have used Segovia’s phone to order the drugs to
21 Segovia’s house. After all, Segovia said, the woman had access to her device, home, and computer, and
22 the familiarity needed to impersonate Segovia in chats. The woman, Segovia also disclosed, had a
23 history of substance abuse. “It all leads to her,” Segovia said, adding that it “hurts me to bring her up”
24 and didn’t want to “throw [this woman] to the wolves” but felt she had to be “honest” with agents. The
25 agents weren’t fooled. Segovia was charged on March 27, 2023. On April 4, 2023, agents interviewed
26 the housekeeper who, by then, had seen the news of the prosecution against Segovia. “I’m just sick to
27 my stomach,” she told agents. “When someone blames you, it’s just really hurtful. I’m just devastated.”
28

C. March 14, 2023: Segovia is linked to Indian pill network by website

During the March 14 interview, Segovia consented to agents reviewing her phone's contents. They came upon a WhatsApp chat between Segovia and the user of an Indian phone number—whose first name, they would later learn, was “Saud.” (More on this chat below.)

Agents also found this number listed on a website that advertised prescription drugs, including Tramadol, Adderall, and Ambien. The website's “contact us” page listed Segovia's home address.

The Indian phone number appeared, too, in an August 2022 police report from Tuscaloosa, Alabama, on the fentanyl overdose death of Dr. Louis Burgio, a renowned University of Alabama psychology professor and Alzheimer's researcher who died from a counterfeit pill that originated abroad.² Dr. Burgio and Segovia had evidently independently communicated with the user of that Indian number.

D. March 15, 2023: suspected fentanyl shipment from China intercepted

On March 15, 2023, the day after Segovia's second interview with Homeland Security, lead agent David Vargas was notified of an apparent controlled substance seizure in Kentucky. The parcel originated in China on March 10, 2023 and was addressed to Segovia's home. Inside was a disassembled clock kit and square and round white stickers. Testing with a device called a Gemini™ Chemical Identification Analyzer identified “Valeryl Fentanyl Hydrochloride” on the square stickers and “Valeryl Fentanyl Hydrochloride and/or Oxycodone hydrochloride” on the round stickers. Valeryl Fentanyl is a synthetic



² *United States v. Christopher Louis Bass*, Case No. 7:23-cr-00434-LSC-GMB, Doc. 26 (govt's sentencing memo). *See also* <https://www.tuscaloosaneews.com/story/news/2024/12/19/case-closed-in-death-of-university-of-alabama-psychology-professor/77076186007/>.

1 fentanyl analogue and a Schedule I narcotic. Oxycodone hydrochloride is a Schedule II narcotic.

2 Investigators were concerned that Segovia, cut off from her source in India by Homeland
3 Security's detection, had pivoted and ordered drugs from a new supplier, this time in China.

4 Segovia was charged with importation of a controlled substance—specifically fentanyl—on
5 March 27, 2023. At the time that was the most recently seized shipment of suspected drugs to Segovia.

6 But on April 7, 2023, a Homeland Security lab analysis found no controlled substances in the
7 clock exhibit. The lab test superseded the field test. Special Agent Vargas received the lab report on
8 Saturday, April 8, 2023. It was disclosed to counsel for Segovia that Monday. The government believes
9 that there was no fentanyl in the shipment from China. The prosecution was unable to determine how
10 the Gemini analyzer, a sophisticated device that retails for \$170,000, produced two false positives.

11 **E. Analysis of Segovia's chat with supplier Saud between 2020 and 2023**

12 On March 14, when Segovia let agents examine her phone, agents found a long-running
13 encrypted WhatsApp chat between Segovia and her sales-rep supplier, an Indian national named Saud,
14 between January 2020 and March 2023.³ Many months are missing or deleted, and the relationship was
15 clearly preexisting at the time of the first exchanges. But the chat provides about 17 months of steady
16 correspondence. It provides a fairly full, revealing picture of Segovia's conduct.

17 First, Segovia was dependent on Saud for drugs, no doubt as one of many clients of his. Segovia
18 during the captured period placed approximately 35 orders, each for hundreds of pills at a time, totaling
19 some 18,000 pills. She ordered (1) "orange" pills, her shorthand for the round, bright orange Tapentadol
20 tablets and (2) "soma," the muscle relaxant made of Carisoprodol. On occasion she inquired about
21 Saud's personal life. She learned that he lived in India and was married. At one point in 2022 he asked
22 for help "buying real estate." She agreed to forward him \$2,500 and said: "I'm always needing orange
23 pills so you [c]an pay me back with them." "I am very excited for you," she continued, "and interested
24 in what you're doing are you buying a house or business or am I being too nosy?"

25 Segovia's messages reveal a desperate appetite for drugs and for a reliable source for them. In
26 May 2021, for instance, she wrote Saud that she "wanted to check if there is another shipment of orange
27

28 ³ The government knows his identity but withholds it here under Department of Justice policy.

1 pills coming? I'm fine right now of course just need to keep an eye on whats coming and whAt i have so
 2 i dont run low, cause when that happens i run out and you have to go crazy to get me some fast!!" She
 3 added: "Speaking of getting for me fast, i realize that once again you did everything to get me them
 4 quickly! Because you are always good to me, I'd like to send you \$250 (for you though, not the
 5 company) as a little tip... you can use it for you and your family."

6 Or on June 10, 2021: "Lets do the 540 [Tapentadol pills], its going to kill me monie wise but i
 7 hate to get low...will i get them within a couple of weeks?" Or on June 21, 2021: "I've been miserable
 8 [for] days because i havent had them and its li[k]e a withdrawal thing... if i cant get the soma soon, I
 9 should just stop getting them!" Weeks later she wrote: "By the way, i did want to Thank You, i know
 10 you did everything possible to get what I needed to me...I've been with you for a long time now and i
 11 trust you... in the past whoever it was would be all good and helpful in the very beginning and then after
 12 I had gotten a few orders from them, they really didn't care about what i needed."

13 On September 5, 2021, she wrote: "No news from anyone... im in so much pain... i hope
 14 something comes thru...soon! I know you are trying...!"

15 Or on May 6, 2022: "I received 200 orange pills... I kept hoping the rest would come but they
 16 haven't.... I have the weird orange ones ready to be shipped but since I only got 200 of the good ones and
 17 i share with [redacted], so im lower than i have been in a long time and even though they are terrible, i
 18 may run out and have to use some of those...unless i can pay extra to get the good orange ones quickly..."

19 At times other sellers would try to poach Segovia from Saud. Saud would tell Segovia to block
 20 them on WhatsApp. In February 2022, Segovia admitted to Saud that she tried another seller but regretted
 21 it: "I have almost always gotten good quality stuff from you and i know you do your best for me but at
 22 some point in Nov/Dec when you were having trouble filling my order, i got a batch of orange pills that
 23 just dont work. Unfortunately, i dont know where they came from or where i got them so i don't expect
 24 you to do anything about it... just try to be sure the next batch comes from one if your good sources."

25 Segovia learned that the pills she ordered came, at least in part, from India. At one point she
 26 queried Saud: "The soma is not from India though right? I thought everything was USA now?" He
 27 replied: "Yes they are from USA but stock comes from India." Segovia responded: "What do you mean
 28 the stock is from India but its usa? How can it be both??" Saud: "Means we send stock from India to

usa but this time its' delayed to little delay." The blister packs containing Segovia's pills bore the names of Indian manufacturers and Indian cities and, occasionally, Hindi lettering.

F. Analysis of Segovia's pill redistribution for Saud

The chats also revealed that Segovia reshipped drugs, for Saud, to other customers of his or the Durgapura organization. Doing so was, under the law in Title 21 of the U.S. Code, drug distribution. It was knowing, but also, as explained below, unthinking.

Segovia admitted in her plea agreement that, on two occasions, Saud proposed that she reship for him in return for pills. On the first occasion, on June 15, 2022, he wrote: "If I send you one box for big package of bulk can you forward to me? I'll send you 360 extra orange pills for this work if you agree I'll do." "Yes, i will do that," Segovia replied. "sounds good for both of us... this is in addition to the 540 that you already sent, right? ... its not dangerous for me to get it??"

She admitted to reshipping once more at Saud's direction, though this time she wasn't compensated and expressed hesitancy. Saud wrote her on September 23, 2022: "Did you get this package? Just please confirm so I'll not worry about it." It was a large package of Zolpidem (Ambien). Segovia replied: "I won't be home tonight until about 7:00 (PST) so I won't be able to send it back out until tomorrow." She continued: "So that is not my large order? Why did you send it to me. I feel funny about all this transferring money [more below], but I really would rather not have stuff coming to my house to reship out. I will do it this time of course!" That night she sent a follow-up: "The pkg is here... ill open it tomorrow or should I just send it without opening it!" Saud replied: "You can send it without opening it because that's meds you don't take those are ambiens." Saud at other times offered Segovia pills as a perk for shipping (e.g., Saud: "If you can [ship] it's very grateful and we'll adjust in soma I'll send 180 soma in \$350 for you if you do this"). But it is unclear if the deal happened.

Segovia admitted that on a handful of occasions, Saud asked her to "return" pills to other addresses, after she complained that she hadn't ordered the pills or was concerned about their quality:

- 4/7/21: Segovia to Saud: "I'm so so sorry, i know. It was important and i know [] the person waiting for it really needs it... I'm on my way into work now... just the address and how you be it shipped."
- 4/20/21: Saud: "Send package at this address via overnight please." Segovia: "Shipping is stressful... i was on hold for 25 minutes and then i told them the address was correct and they said their computers are taking it now. It will be delivered tomorrow!"

- 1 • 12/13/21: Saud: “I given you 2 address so in one address ship 360 pills and on other
2 address ship 180 pills.” Segovia: “Ok, will do. Is tomorrow ok?... I will send them when i
3 get into work. What kind of shipping?”
- 4 • 12/23/22: Segovia: ‘How do you want them sent? Ground? Faster? Also just to be sure
5 you know, the second pkg of pills i got are not orange they are the ones that say ‘Vision’
6 something... just send them together?’ Segovia (on 1/3/22): “I went to the Post Office
7 and it was expensive but I sent it 2 day air to arrive on the 5th. i'll send a pic of it now.”
- 8 • 4/26/22: Saud: “Can you return me those [Tapentadol]?? So I'll get refund and reship
9 those 540 pills also. Ship the bad pills at this address today so I'll get money from them.”
10 Segovia (on 5/2/2022): “Im so sorry, im on a business trip because we had 2 officers that
11 got shot! I should be home tomorrow night so ill get them shipped as soon as i can.”
- 12 • 5/10/22: Saud: “Yes these 540 pills are payable and you're sending bad pills back so we
13 are equal just let me known how many pills you're sending so I'll check.” Segovia: “I am
14 sending 440 back of the orange”
- 15 • 5/30/22: Segovia: “I still have those bad orange pills if you yiu want me ti send them
16 somewhere? Are you going to replace those? I think you owe me an order of those
17 correct?” Saud: “Yes 240 pills are on way. And I'll give you address for return of those
18 bad orange pills”

19 Segovia’s “returns” of hundreds and hundreds of pills were in fact acts of drug distribution, with
20 Saud using her to dispatch pills to other users like her. She may not have recognized this at the time, but
21 certainly she should have been suspicious that these “returns” were to random residential addresses
22 across the country. The April 7, 2021 shipment was to a “Dianna” in Asheville, North Carolina. The
23 “bad” pills on May 10, 2022 went to a “Kellie” in Redlands, California. Other pills went to “Karen” in
24 Kewadin, Michigan; “Richard” in Stanwood, Washington; “Charlene” in Sacramento, California. This
25 is not how people return legal online purchases, let alone medications. Segovia knew this work was
26 illegal (“its not dangerous for me to get it?”). She knew drugs were in the parcels (“I know...the person
27 waiting for it really needs it”). The government accepts her explanation that she mailed these packages
28 to build rapport with Saud.

Neither Segovia nor the government knows what actual drugs were in those mailings. In one
case, Saud mentions that the pills were not meant for her because they were “ambiens,” but in most
other instances, she was “returning” some sort of “bad” pills, which Segovia variously called “white”
pills or “bad orange” or “weird orange.”

Segovia sent parcels using SJPOA's UPS account. On April 7, 2021, for example, Segovia verified a shipment she made by sending Saud a photograph (at right) of a UPS receipt with a pre-written SJPOA return address, and signed "J. Segovia."

She also received drugs at her union office. On June 30, 2021, Saud told her: "Please get this package of soma from your office address. And if you're interested I sended you soma extra and orange pills also extra if you can pay for those that's really good because I don't have money for money myself and you don't like the orange pills you can send back." "I did get the packet from my office today!" she replied.

On occasion Segovia was contacted by other illicit pill sellers—people like Saud—who asked her to "work" for them, just as she did for Saud. One invited her to partner with "me too.... I will help you in every thing. In terms of money, or anything related to DEA/CUSTOM." Segovia loyally forwarded the message to Saud, who replied: "He don't know that you're in police he's trying to scare you ☹️" Segovia replied: "Yeah, thats exactly what i was thinking!"

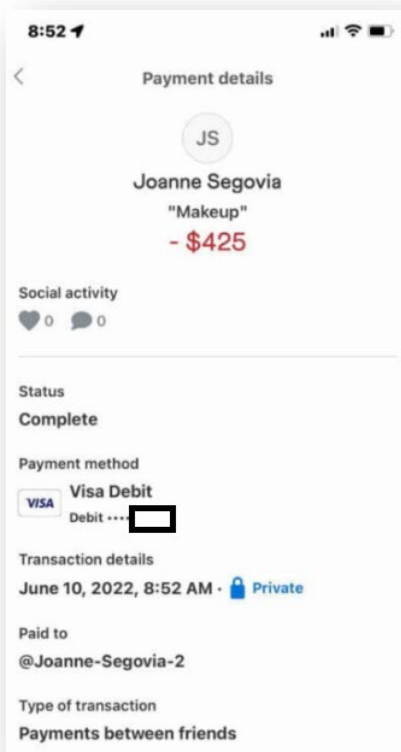
She also learned that others, presumably drug users like her, were shipping to *her* at Saud's direction. For instance, on May 19, 2021, Segovia inquired about two packages she was expecting. Saud told her that the shipper "didn't send invoice she's afraid because you're in police so I'll send you email to send payment to them via PayPal." Segovia replied: "Oh no, did you explain that we are not the Police, we are there I'm Union [not] the police, besides if she was sending it to home [how] did she know that??"

G. Analysis of Segovia's money transfers for Saud

Segovia admitted in her plea agreement that, twice, Saud sent her money on one platform and asked her to repay him through another platform. This helped him secure profits and evade restrictions. She also received money that she forwarded to him. She acknowledged that she knew he was making money from illegal sales of controlled substances. She was not promised money or perks to do so but

acted to bolster their relationship. On June 1, 2021, for instance, Saud wrote: “I sended you \$340 more via Venmo did you get it?” “Sorry, i just saw this now,” Segovia replied. “ive never had money in Venmo before, how do i get the money so i can send you money thru cash or any other way!” Later Saud wrote: “You don't have any crypto wallet to send money? In United States people are mostly paying through crypto.” Segovia replied: “No, that’s funny because no one i know uses that or thinks it’s a good idea. Sorry!” In August 2021, Segovia was sent a few hundred dollars from Saud and wrote: “You want me to go in to my Venmo account and from there, take that money and deposit it into My

paypal account to send it out? Obviously, I’ve never done this before. I want to help you though!” On April 27, 2022, Saud wrote: “Because i can only trust you if you say I'll send you via Venmo and you can pay that via PayPal.”



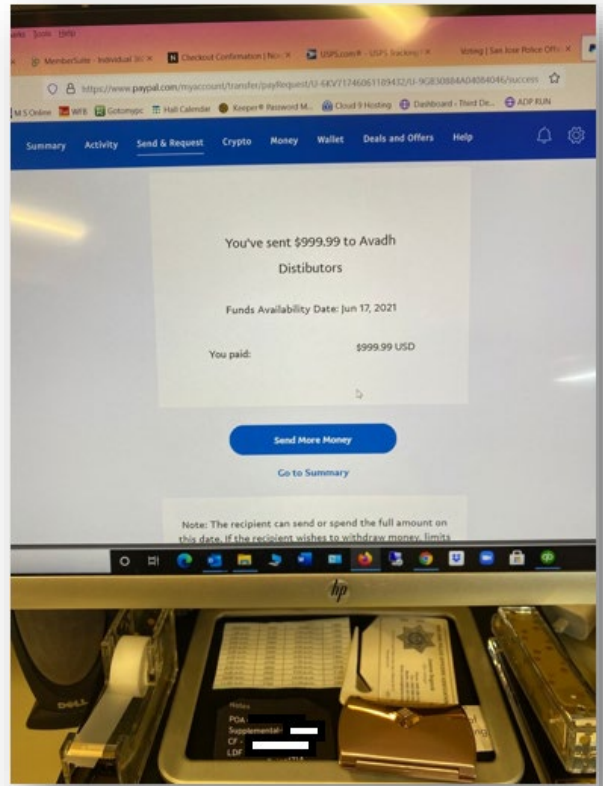
CashApp became a platform of choice. Agents identified 127 CashApp transactions with five people from whom Segovia would receive money and then transfer it to Saud. Saud asked Segovia to lie to PayPal, such as when he wrote: “Hey PayPal email for you asking the payment for tell them the payment is for cosmetics products so please do this otherwise my money is on hold.” Venmo transactions, similarly, were often disguised with labels like “makeup” (see image at left).

Segovia knew that Saud needed her help because he was being thwarted by account freezes due to his platform policy violations. For instance, on May 11, 2022, Saud asked her to send him money on CashApp because “PayPal blocked my around \$18000 and I don't know they'll give me back or not but if I take payment through these they will not get on hold.” He added: “Thank you so much it's very grateful you help me in this time.”

She moved money for Saud from her SJPOA office. On June 14, 2021, Saud pressed Segovia to send \$200 to someone else. She replied: “Sorry, i had 50 new officers starting today so if I’ve been tied up all morning. I’ll be back on the office within an hour and I’ll take care of all of it!” Later Segovia, to prove the remittance, sent Saud a screenshot of a PayPal receipt, for \$999.99, on her desktop—inadvertently leaving visible SJPOA network passwords on a notepad (redacted at right).

H. Analysis of Segovia’s drug orders, consumption, and spending

The government’s investigation focused on whether Segovia was receiving these huge quantities of pills for her own use, or for distribution to others, or some mix of both.



The Saud-Segovia chat reflects orders amounting to some 18,000 Tapentadol pills over about 17 months. That’s about 1,058 pills a month, or 35 a day. She also ordered about 4,860 carisoprodol (or “soma”) pills. In 2022, in particular, she ordered 7,740 Tapentadol pills—or 645 a month, or 21.5 a day. She told the government that she took around 20 “orange” pills a day. At least some orders were intercepted by customs (see image at left of a parcel seized in 2021) or never shipped. Some parcels arrived with fewer pills than expected. Some pills were “bad” and she ordered new batches. She shared significant quantities of pills with two people she knew.



But the bottom line is that, so far as the government can ascertain from careful scrutiny of financial, WhatsApp, and shipping records, Segovia was ordering almost entirely for personal use.

Moreover, she was not profiting from her redistribution or money movements (aside from the one time when she was clearly remunerated with pills). To the contrary, her Tapentadol habit cost her at least \$20,000 a year. On June 30, 2021, she wrote Saud: “I’m kind of broke from these orders.”

I. The 726 Tapentadol pills that form the basis for the Guidelines calculation

Tapentadol is a prescription opioid comparable in strength to morphine.⁴ A sample of the blister pack of “orange” pills that she typically received is at right. A total of 726 Tapentadol pills were seized from Segovia. Specifically, on March 24, 2023, Homeland Security agents searched her home, finding 73, and her SJPOA office, finding another 283 (some pictured below).



Another 370 were intercepted on April 3, 2023 in parcels that she ordered in late March. These pills were all lab-confirmed as Tapentadol. They are the only Tapentadol pills that the prosecution had in its possession to test. The Guidelines calculation in the plea agreement and Presentence Report is based on these seized, lab-tested quantities. Nevertheless, the government has shared with the Court the full information showing the scope of Segovia’s importation and use.

When dealing with fraud-infected foreign pill merchants, testing is important. Neither Segovia, nor a customs inspector, nor any operative handling the drugs, actually knows for sure what was in any particular batch of untested pills. This was demonstrated dramatically in the seizures from Rajiv

⁴ See, e.g., <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2009/02/17/E9-3150/schedules-of-controlled-substances-placement-of-tapentadol-into-schedule-ii>.
GOVERNMENT’S SENTENCING MEMORANDUM

1 Agnihotri. Eight parcels, together containing tens of thousands of pills, were seized from him and lab
 2 tested. A full *quarter* of the drugs proved, dangerously, to be counterfeits—in fact, the tablets contained
 3 different drugs altogether. 5,000 tablets labeled as Zolpidem (Ambien) were actually alprazolam (an
 4 anti-anxiety medication). Some 80 tablets labeled as Tapentadol actually contained Pregabalin, a
 5 powerful anti-anxiety and anti-seizure medication that has psychoactive properties⁵ and has led to deaths
 6 particularly in Europe and Australia.⁶ The peril here is acute: someone is taking a drug that they are
 7 unaware that they are taking, indeed a drug belonging to an entirely different drug class.

8 There is evidence that Segovia herself received mislabeled counterfeits. On June 30, 2021,
 9 Segovia wrote Saud: “ive been off work for 2 days. I was really bad, after taking pills on the day after
 10 they got there, i felt really, really strange... like they altered my mind instead of the pain... im hoping
 11 that it was all a coincidence or maybe i took something too soon on between doses. I was really worried
 12 that it was something in the pills themselves... so now i guess i will just try a pill from each pkg i got
 13 and see if it happens again.” Later in the day she wrote: “You don’t think the pills were tainted, do
 14 you?” “Yes may be,” Saud replied, “but this time you’ll get the same pills like always.” Segovia wrote:
 15 “Yes maybe they are tainted, that’s scary because almost everything i received was the odd ones!!”

16 A few days later, on July 4, 2021, she placed another order, still rattled by the “tainted” pills:
 17 “Sorry, my phone was on silent (grandkids) i would like 360 of the good orange ones... can they get
 18 here within a week? Don’t just tell me yes, if you can’t.... i dont want to have to use the other kind...
 19 they made me feel really weird for like even like 12 hours After i took them, terrible feeling!”

20 It’s impossible to know for certain, but Segovia may have consumed Pregabalin, which, taken at
 21 high doses, can produce dizziness, disorientation, and cognitive impairment. But Saud, whether by
 22 design or incompetence, kept sending the wrong pills. In November 2021, she complained about bad
 23 pills again: “Yes, I’ll order... just crawling out of bed... give [m]e an hour or so, please... also we need
 24 to talk because i got those weird orange pills yesterday. Ill send a picture!”

25
 26 ⁵ See <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2005/07/28/05-15036/schedules-of-controlled-substances-placement-of-pregabalin-into-schedule-v>.

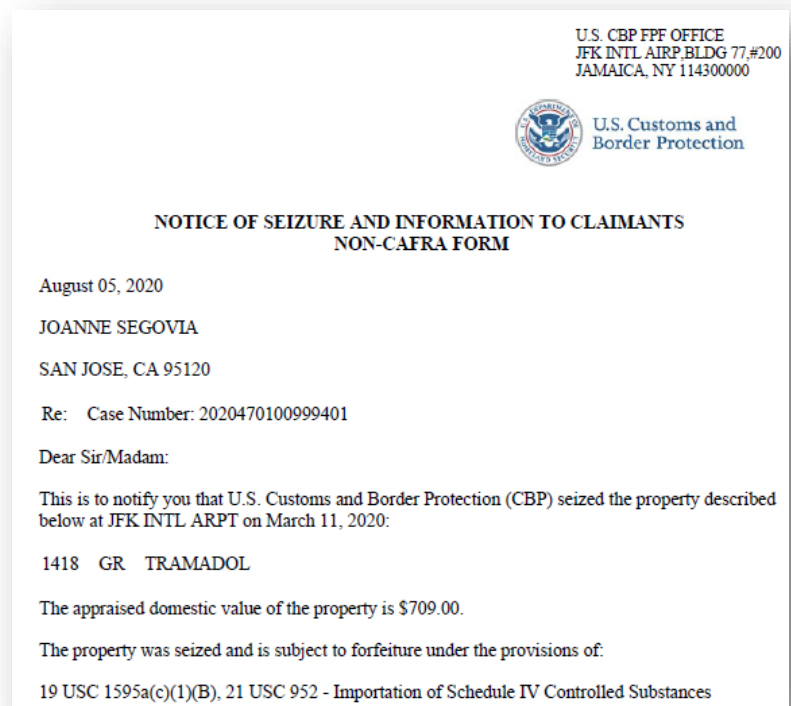
27 ⁶ See, e.g., <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-northern-ireland-66568460>;
 28 <https://www.channel4.com/news/exclusive-prescriptions-rising-for-anxiety-drug-linked-to-1-in-10-drug-deaths-in-england>; <https://www1.racgp.org.au/news/gp/clinical/misuse-of-popular-anti-epileptic-drug-linked-to-nu>. See also <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC7688538/>.

Sometimes Segovia's fear, alternately, was that the pills were inert. On January 5, 2022, she wrote: "i got a batch if orange pills that were really bad quality and didnt work at all, but i had no way of knowing where they came from. Ok, i dont want to worry about running out so go ahead and order 540 more orange, and 180 500 soma!" On May 6, 2022, she wrote: "If i get the 340 of the good orange, then I want to send the bad ones back.... i don't think there is anything in those damn things!" Saud tried to placate his customer: "Yes after you said that you don't want to get return the bad pills we are equal on that money for 540 orange pills and i paid them and after that I shipped total 540 more pills than you received 200 pills last week and 360 pills today.... But because you taken bad pills so i given you \$300 discount you need to pay me \$1100 instead of \$1400."

J. Segovia's Customs and Border Protection notices between 2019 and 2023

Segovia received multiple notices from U.S. Customs and Border Protection that informed her that inspectors had seized packages sent to her because they appeared to contain controlled substances. The letters even cited the very anti-importation prohibition that she has now pleaded guilty to violating: 21 U.S.C. § 952. At right, for instance, is a letter dated August 5, 2020 that advised her of the impoundment of 1.4 kilograms grams of suspected Tramadol, valued at around \$700. She got another letter, in July 2019, when more Tramadol was detained. That time she even hand-signed and mailed back a form in which she abandoned the seized items.

When agents interviewed her in March 2023, Segovia had in her home yet another seizure letter from Customs and Border Protection. It stated that officials at Los Angeles International Airport seized a package, addressed to her, that contained 1.55 kilograms of



Zolpidem, appraised at \$1,920. The basis for the seizure, once more, was “21 USC 952 - Importation of Schedule IV Controlled Substances.” The letter noted that the parcel, originating in the U.K., declared its contents as “Toys.” She showed agents the letter—and the empty box from which the suspected drugs had been removed by customs officials.

II. PROCEDURAL HISTORY

On March 27, 2023, Segovia was charged by a Criminal Complaint with one violation of Unlawful Importation of a Schedule II Controlled Substance (fentanyl) in violation of 21 U.S.C. § 952(a)(2) and § 960(a)(1). Doc. 1. On March 31, 2023, she surrendered to Homeland Security agents outside of the San Jose federal courthouse and was arraigned that morning. Doc. 6. On August 12, 2024, she was charged by an Information, after waiving her right to grand jury indictment, with Unlawful Importation of a Schedule II Controlled Substance (Tapentadol) in violation of 21 U.S.C. § 952(a)(2) and § 960(a)(1). Doc. 55. On October 10, 2024, she pleaded guilty to that count. Doc. 59.

III. GUIDELINES CALCULATION

The parties and Probation agree on the following Guidelines calculation:

Base Offense Level, U.S.S.G. § 2D1.1(a)(5) & (c)(8)	24
Lab-tested Tapentadol pills, with morphine as comparator; 1 gram morphine = 500 grams CDW; 361.8 grams lab-tested Tapentadol pills = 180.9 kg CDW	
Acceptance of Responsibility	- 3
Zero-point offender (U.S.S.G. § 4C1.1)	- 2
Safety valve relief (U.S.S.G. § 2D1.1(b)(18))	- 2
Total Adjusted Offense Level	17

Ms. Segovia’s criminal history is I, with zero points. The Guidelines range is 24-30 months.

IV. SENTENCING RECOMMENDATION

The government recommends a sentence of probation.

This is an unusual case. It began as an investigation into whether Ms. Segovia was engaged in distributing controlled substances in concert with foreign criminals. Suspicion arose from the immense quantities of pills she was receiving. It was aggravated by her efforts at deception. But the government after extensive investigation is convinced that Ms. Segovia was in fact largely a heavy consumer of

1 Tapentadol and Soma pills. She certainly assisted a criminal group by transferring money and by
 2 redistributing drug parcels for one of its operatives. But her preeminent crime is the one she was originally
 3 charged with: unlawful importation of controlled substances, albeit Tapentadol instead of fentanyl.

4 Ms. Segovia is a 66-year-old grandmother with no criminal history. She began using
 5 hydrocodone under prescription. This became an addiction. When she could no longer acquire the pills
 6 from a doctor, she turned to the internet. She ordered online for years. Eventually she reached the point
 7 of ordering, in 2022, about 7,740 Tapentadol pills. She took them all day long. She recalls using 20 a
 8 day in 2022. That would be 7,300 a year. This is an extraordinarily large amount to consume. But her
 9 consumption tracks the number of pills she ordered. In light of all the information that the government
 10 has, Segovia did not order quantities of Tapentadol significantly in excess of personal use. It was in part
 11 to get to the bottom of this—to satisfy itself that nothing more was afoot—that the government required
 12 extended time to conclude the matter.

13 So Segovia has pleaded guilty to being an importer of drugs. In doing so she pumped tens of
 14 thousands of dollars over the years into the coffers of these unscrupulous networks (whose
 15 representatives were eager to ship mislabeled “bad” pills to others). But she was an importer because
 16 she was a user.

17 Over time Segovia was drawn into more
 18 than merely ordering. She distributed pills. She
 19 did so at Saud’s bequest, usually under his
 20 pretense of having her “return” pills. She
 21 admitted that she was once compensated with
 22 pills for reshipping.

23 It should have been clear to her that she
 24 was also sending “bad” pills to unwitting others.
 25 For instance, here is Segovia in December 2021:
 26 “Let me know where to send the weird pills and
 27 the other orange ones and ill do my best to get
 28 them out tomorrow.” Saud: “Ship all wrong



1 orange pills at this address [a residence in Southaven, Mississippi].” Or here is Saud on April 26, 2022:
2 “Ship the bad pills at this address [an apartment in Spencer, Iowa] today so I'll get money from them.”
3 These “wrong” and “bad” pills had made her sick.

4 The government also confirmed, through a search warrant executed on a person in Redlands,
5 California, who distributed for Saud to Segovia, and to whom Segovia sent money for Saud, that it was a
6 Durgapura tactic to have one American ship to another (see the “US to US” in the screenshot on page 2).
7 That’s because the chief obstacle for the network is getting the substances into the U.S. Packages
8 crossing into ports are scanned and a percentage interdicted. So the network used domestic customers as
9 shipping agents, in addition to insiders like Rajiv Agnihotri (who received pills directly from foreign co-
10 conspirators). Segovia performed this reshipping work for the Indian group. She did so even though
11 she asked Saud if it was “dangerous” for her to do. That said, she expressed discomfort with it and
12 stopped agreeing to reship for Saud (excepting in the “return” scenario) after doing it twice.

13 She knew her conduct was unlawful. She admits that. Indeed, she had the unusual experience of
14 receiving letters from a branch of the very agency that later investigated her, letters that informed her
15 that receipt of pills from foreign sources was quite possibly a federal offense. It cited the statute that she
16 was later charged with. She even signed and returned one letter to disclaim ownership of the drugs.

17 But one central fact distinguishes Segovia from the “drug dealers” usually targeted for
18 prosecution: drug dealers get into the business to make money. Segovia was losing money. In fact, she
19 was hemorrhaging tens of thousands a year on her habit. The price varied but Saud charged her between
20 \$2.50 and \$3.50 per Tapentadol pill. That would mean she spent between around \$19,450 and \$27,000
21 on Tapentadol in 2022 alone. She was a good customer, which is why Saud sent a flurry of distressed
22 messages when she stopped texting with him: “Did I do something wrong?” “If you say I'll place your
23 order very good offer available 540 orange pills in just \$1400,” “We are like family i care about you and
24 your family,” “I am very upset you're not texting me back,” “Hey are you okay? I'll give good offer for
25 you on soma 500 mg,” “If you say I'll send one free package to you.” That said, the WhatsApp chat was
26 not the end of her relationship with Saud. He finally emailed her using her SJPOA email. In her last
27 exchange with him, on March 23, 2023, the day before her home and office were searched, she
28 responded: “ I want to send the rest of your money through cashapp, do i still send to [redacted]?”

1 Why Segovia's address appeared on a website advertising illegal pill sales remains a mystery.
2 The government's guess is that an Indian operative put it there, not Segovia.

3 The prosecution interviewed a half-dozen other customers of the Durgapura network in the Bay
4 Area who had received pills from Agnihotri or others. The diversity of the customers was surprising but
5 perhaps should not have been, because drug abuse touches all segments of American life. The group
6 included a nurse, a flight attendant, a successful patent-holding drug researcher, a grade-school teacher,
7 and a filmmaker. Their stories helped put Segovia's conduct into context.

8 All readily admitted (unlike, initially, Segovia) that they understood that getting prescription
9 drugs off the internet or by phone from illegitimate sellers, without a doctor in sight, was illegal. They
10 acknowledged dependencies that they could not satisfy lawfully. Some recalled being asked to "return"
11 pills, to a new address, once or twice. This was distribution, though none of them thought of it as such.

12 But Segovia went further than they did in a few respects. No other customer recalled shipping
13 for bonus pills. (These individuals were all deemed credible.) No one else exchanged money on digital
14 currency platforms for a supplier. The government believes that Segovia's conduct separates her from
15 these and many other thousands of clients of foreign pill conspiracies.

16 The government believes that this conduct justifies a criminal conviction, but not a custodial
17 sentence.

18 Another fact that ultimately cuts two ways: she was Executive Director of the San Jose Police
19 Officers' Association at the time of the offense. On the one hand, she served in a law enforcement
20 adjacent position. The SJPOA regularly issued messaging to condemn drug abuse and drug distribution.
21 Segovia's conduct was thus hypocritical. On the other hand, neither Segovia nor SJPOA had
22 operational control over law enforcement. Segovia was not sworn nor part of any command structure.
23 Her actual work duties amounted to being an office manager of a staff of three or four. She booked
24 banquet halls, planned social events, and coordinated fallen officer memorials. The government
25 corroborated this understanding from a review of her emails obtained from her SJPOA email account.
26
27
28

Segovia engaged in illegal importation and distribution using union resources. She kept pills at her office (pictured at right on the day of the search). She paid Saud or moved money for him at her office. She mailed packages using the SJPOA's UPS account, thus making the SJPOA subsidize foreign drug distribution.



The government has no evidence that the SJPOA was aware of her misconduct. At the same

time, the SJPOA announced publicly after the search of Segovia's office that it wished to cooperate with this investigation. Yet counsel for the SJPOA engaged in stonewalling, even threatening to "seek judicial intervention" to stop the prosecution from reviewing Segovia's SJPOA email contents, though the SJPOA never followed through on its threat.

* * *

Ms. Segovia's decision to lie to special agents, while purporting to advance their interests, was reprehensible. This was not just the normal blundering dissimulation blurted out when a target is first surprised and confronted by law enforcement. Segovia took six weeks to ponder her predicament, concocted a story ("it all leads to" the housekeeper) that she sought accounted for the evidence that she knew agents would find, then voluntarily approached agents to relay that story. As noted, the agents did not credit it for a moment, which is why no Guidelines enhancement for obstruction of justice applies. U.S.S.G. § 3C1.1, App. Note 4(G); *United States v. Solano-Godines*, 120 F.3d 957, 963 (9th Cir. 1997).

The government at the same time acknowledges that she willingly offered her phone to agents. She was evidently trying both to deflect blame and to give agents the information to pursue, she thought, the culpable foreign principals. Plainly she wasn't thinking clearly. This was not the behavior of a "mastermind," but a scared, confused, and addicted woman who saw the walls collapsing around her.

1 The government also credits her for a truthful proffer and for fully accepting responsibility.

2 Finally, there is the issue of rehabilitation. Ms. Segovia seems to have achieved something
3 extraordinary here: she liberated herself from a drug habit built up over decades. Since March 2023, as
4 a condition of pretrial release, she has been subjected to 45 random urinalysis tests. She has tested
5 negative for illicit drug use every single time. That is altogether atypical.

6 * * *

7 A sentence must be sufficient but not greater than necessary. The government has tried to show
8 that Segovia's case is an uncommon one: her behavior was that of a person who was a user, not a dealer.
9 She held a position that should have instilled her with firmer respect for the law and for her obligation to
10 be truthful with law enforcement. But the price she paid for her choices has been steep: termination
11 from her job and the upending of her life as she knew it—even if this chapter now includes sobriety.
12 The government believes that her contrition is sincere and that she poses little risk of reoffending.

13 * * *

14 A final element of this tragedy is that Segovia, like so many, was introduced to opioids through
15 lawful prescriptions before being cut off and turning to the underworld to meet her needs. In this she is
16 no different than many thousands of Americans illegally ordering prescription drugs each day. Segovia,
17 after all, was just one of 700 people, in 48 states, who got received from Rajiv Agnihotri. These pill-
18 stuffed parcels crisscross the country, sent by one citizen to another, all at the direction of a faceless
19 profiteer abroad.

20 The government hopes that more Americans will recognize that websites that offer discreetly
21 shipped “medications,” are, despite professional-looking homepages, usually fronts for unethical foreign
22 criminal networks. They hawk pills of doubtful safety with no quality control. They ship under false
23 labels. (See below for a seizure from Agnihotri, with drugs hidden in snacks.) They do not care about
24 anyone's bodily integrity. They often escape accountability due to residence on foreign soil. The active
25 ingredient in these pills is never more than a guess. Once the pill is ingested, the evidence vanishes. There
26 are larger issues beyond the scope of this case—regarding prescribing practice, drug prices, insurance,
27 treatment for mental health or substance abuse—that lead so many Americans to seek drugs outside of
28 lawful channels. But as this case shows, the unlawful channels are unsafe, legally and physiologically.



Seizure from Agnihotri, with drugs hidden in snacks

One recipient of Agnihotri's packages told investigators that he scrutinized his pills and packaging to detect counterfeits. That may work sometimes. But counterfeits seized from Agnihotri—tablets with different active ingredients from those on the label—were visually indistinguishable. Segovia was lucky to escape the fate of Dr. Burgio, the pioneering Alzheimer's professor in Alabama who died from a counterfeit fentanyl pill—he and Segovia shared Saud as a supplier. She is also lucky that she didn't end up like the Minnesota man who,

redistributing for a foreign network in the same way as Segovia, mailed Dr. Burgio his fatal pill. In December 2024 that man received 20 years in federal prison for causing the professor's death.

But more will die because of these pill schemes. Those who participate in making this business more lucrative play a small but indispensable part in imperiling the lives of fellow citizens. That is one last reason that the government has undertaken to tell the Court, at length, the story of Ms. Segovia.

V. CONCLUSION

For these reasons, the government respectfully recommends a sentence of probation and three years of supervised release. The government joins Probation's recommendations as to a fine and restitution.

DATED: January 14, 2025

/s/
 JOSEPH TARTAKOVSKY
 Assistant United States Attorney